

Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board (SPAB) Annual Retreat

Mithun (Pier 56, 1201 Alaskan Way, Suite 200)

Saturday, May 3, 10AM to 2PM

Attending: Celeste Gilman, Chair; Jon Morgan; Kristen Lohse; Randy Earle; T. Frick McNamara; Paul Niebanck; Tom Williams; Howard Wu; Chris Tachibana, Secretary; Peg Staeheli, SvR, Former SPAB member

1. Settling in, coffee (10:00)

2. Extended introductions - what we do, why we joined SPAB, what we're passionate about, and one surprising fact about ourselves (10:30)

Each SPAB member gave information on their neighborhood and the SPAB issues that most interest them.

3. SPAB policies and procedures (11:10)

This document was updated at last year's retreat but not finalized and posted. Changes can still be made and it will be voted on at a regular meeting.

Points discussed were: II. F guidelines for communications by Board members; IV. A which calls for the Pedestrian Coordinator to provide a list of programs with pedestrian impact at the beginning of each budget cycle, but hasn't happened; communication channels between, and roles of SPAB, City Council and the Mayor; IV. D on getting presentations materials in advance so we can look over the information before meetings. Relevant to this point, Paul suggested having SPAB sign off on topics would give each side more responsibility.

Changes were suggested, included an annual meeting with City Council; increasing public awareness of SPAB via media and invitations for public comment; focusing issues that SPAB would to publicize.

4. SPAB work plan - what we've done, what we'd like to do, how we'd like to do it, part I (11:40)

In late 2007, SPAB members met with the Mayor, City Council members and representatives of SDOT (Seattle Department of Transportation), Department of Planning and Department of Neighborhoods. This has resulted in more awareness and connections between SPAB and these groups, and a work plan with a list of projects each SPAB member would work on.

Celeste suggested focusing this list. T. and Howard said the breaking down to subcommittees helped with creating deadlines and coordinating attendance at public meetings. Howard suggested prioritizing the workplan issues.

Paul gave a summary of progress on his issues, with subsequent discussions. Specific suggestions made include: making contacts for Neighborhood Plans; an advisory on redesign and traffic signalling of the Pike/Pine corridor from a pedestrian safety viewpoint (including no right turn on red); impact of waterfront redesign on downtown and Pioneer Square; an advisory on funding for parks, an upcoming park levy.

On the Pedestrian Master Plan, he passed out copies of a vision statement he drafted in early April, the first part of which was adopted as PMPAG's vision statement.

5. Potluck lunch. Walking words game (12:15)

Words learned while working on SPAB issues were discussed and will be incorporated into a SPAB glossary that Chris has been making.

6. Pedestrian Master Plan - past present and future (1:00)

Peg gave a history of the plan and handed out a summary draft document on tasks. The push for a Master Plan and the definition of basic issues came from SPAB. One driving document was a mission statement/memo to council from Rob Ketcherside, former SPAB Chair. The framework came out of a Council study on public education programs.

Currently, SDOT is doing data-gathering in-house, with separate groups for enforcement, Safe Routes to Schools and publicity. It's difficult, however, for citizens to find out what is going on. Ideas are being generated by PMPAG (Pedestrian Master Plan Advisory Group). Peg is in the process of interviewing each member. A key decision has been to make the plan web-based, for general accessibility and to make it easier for the vision-impaired.

SvR is the consultant on the Master Plan and has divided the project into three parts. The first is defining tasks. The second is obtaining and managing the needed database information. Methods for ped counts and risk analysis are being evaluated and data will be gathered beginning soon. Land use types have been picked. The state of the pedestrian environment report is being done by Tool Design and will be completed the week of 23 May. It is a snapshot of pedestrianism in Seattle. A Toolbox of Strategies and Solutions will be created with the goal of better design, maintenance and policy practices. The third part of the project is solutions and mapping, with a goal of ending the plan with defined projects that need to be done or are in preliminary stage. Data collection includes both safety and some pedestrian quality issues.

The schedule plan is to be done in September. PMPAG was meant to be dissolved in October but Peg believes they will need to go through December.

Kristen asked about firms that are involved. SvR and Tool Design are the main consultants. Heffron and Livable Streets are transportation specialist. Others include Bright, Mark Fenton and the arborist Sue Nichols. SvR and Tool are doing finance.

6. WSDOT Ped & Bike Plan comments (1:30)

Mark Bandy sent a summary by email. He has offered to write an advisory, so we will address this at the next monthly meeting.

Peg said WSDOT and Seattle's plans should be connected and someone should contact a state official about this. Relevant to driver's education and training, Celeste promoted a policy to automatically suspend or revoke the license of a driver involved in an incident with a bicycle or pedestrian. The length of the suspension would be determined by severity of injuries. Howard said this came up at the first Seattle WSDOT open house.

Driver's education was discussed, with everyone agreeing that it is inadequate, especially compared to other countries, which have more extensive (and expensive) training programs. Proposed ideas included regular retesting for license renewal, increasing the age at which a license can be obtained and mobility education-type programs that teach about multiple transportation modes.

Paul would like to see the state invite local initiatives and involvement and an annual convention of pedestrian advocates and board chairs. Peg said this used to happen, but hasn't lately (but should). Howard said PSRC's Vision 2040 might be interested in this issue. Other topics discussed included connections and frictions between different regions and levels of government, the importance of connections between transit and pedestrianism, and the empowerment given to pedestrians by a robust Master Plan.

7. SPAB work plan, part II (1:55)

Subcommittees were formed, with each member volunteering for one or more main interest areas (first person is Chair)

Physical Improvement Projects: Howard and Randy, Kristen, Mark, Ben, Chris, T., Randy

Safety, Education and Enforcement: Chris, Paul, Celeste

Climate and Health: T. and Kristen, Randy

Design Guidance: T. and Kristen, Howard

Funding (Creative Funding): Mark, Celeste, Tom

Planning: Howard, Paul, T., Mark

Transit: Ben, Jon

Outreach: Jon, Ben

Subcommittee meeting announcements will go out to everyone and can be attended by any interested members.

8. Adjourn (2:15)